

France May Set Age of Consent at 13 After Man Acquitted of Raping 11yo

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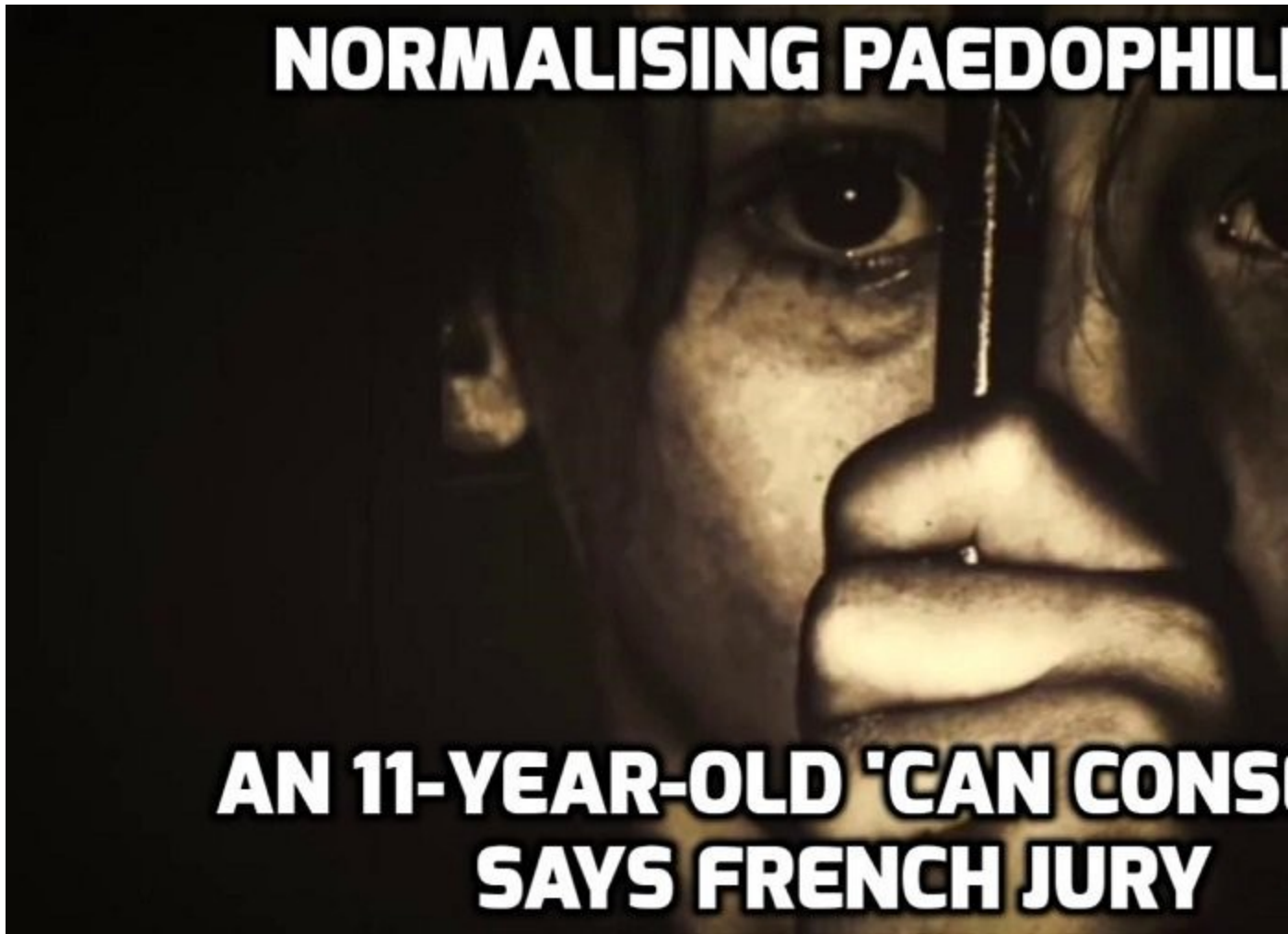
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The French government is considering setting the minimum age for sexual consent following a controversial decision by a jury to spare a man accused of raping an 11-year-old girl. The verdict has sparked a public outcry and calls to revise the law.

The bill, if adopted, will set a benchmark in French law on sexual violence, as it will for the first time define the age limit under which any sexual intercourse with a minor is legally considered rape.

“The question of the age below which the minor’s consent is presumed not to exist is crucial, because there are obviously extremely shocking and unacceptable situations,” French Justice Minister Nicole Belloubet said, as cited by RTL radio.

Regarding the age of consent, Belloubet said that the age of 13 “is worth considering,” while noting that the final decision in each case should lie within the discretion of the judges.



NORMALISING PAEDOPHILIA

**AN 11-YEAR-OLD 'CAN CONSENT'
SAYS FRENCH JURY**

Marlene Schiappa, a junior minister for gender equality, argues that it should lie somewhere between 13 and 15 years.

“Below a certain age, it is considered that there can be no debate on the sexual consent of a child, and that any child below a certain age would automatically be considered to be raped or sexually assaulted,” Schiappa told BMF TV.

The need to amend the law was brought to light by the jury verdict in the case of a 30-year-old man who, back in 2009, allegedly lured an 11-year-old girl into a sexual relationship.

Last week, the man, a Cape Verdean native, was tried by a jury court and acquitted after prosecutors, who were seeking eight years in jail for the defendant, failed to prove that the sex was non-consensual.

Under current French law, only sexual acts committed with the use of “violence, coercion, threat or surprise” are considered to be rape,

regardless of the victim's age. Penalties are tougher if the victim is under the age of 15, but there is no minimum age of consent.

Following the encounter, the girl, who is of Congolese descent, became pregnant and subsequently gave birth to a baby which her family decided to place in foster care out of fear of being condemned in the community. The family took the case to court, but only years later.

It is the second case in less than two months that came under the media spotlight for what is viewed by some as a verdict too lenient for a suspect accused of sexually assaulting a minor.

In late September, an 11-year-old girl reportedly followed a 28-year-old man into his flat north of Paris, where they repeatedly engaged in sexual acts. The girl's mother said that her daughter was devastated by what happened to her, but was unable to put up any resistance as she was numb from shock.

Despite her mother's claims that the 11-year-old was unable to defend herself, the prosecutors dropped the charges of rape and charged the perpetrator with sexual assault of a minor below the age of 15 instead, brushing off the girl's legal team's arguments that she was unable to surmise what was going on.

The French Criminal Code envisages a punishment of up to five years of incarceration for sexual offenses. For rape, offenders face a much harsher penalty of 15 years behind bars if the victim is 15 or older, and up to 20 years if the victim is a minor under 15.

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Reference: [RT.com](#)